

# THE FRENCH REVOLUTION 1789-1799



***LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ***



# **FRENCH REVOLUTION**

From the Seeds of Discontent to the  
Reign of Terror

# France Prior to the Revolution

- Financial problems beset France- Expenses
  - American Revolution
  - Seven Year War 1756-1763 (also known as the French and Indian War)
  - Spanish Succession War
  - Austrian Succession War
- Enlightenment Ideas stirred France
  - Salons- discussed ideas of Democracy and Liberty
    - Voltaire, Locke, Rousseau, Jefferson
- Industrial Revolution was creating a new class of people
  - Bourgeoisie – Professional Class- Not Nobles- Bankers, Lawyers, Doctors
- Serfdom
  - Vestiges of the Past- Serfdom still existed in France
- Famine
  - Poor harvests and Inflation

# Wars



- Europe who would dominate Europe? (Balance Power)
- 18<sup>th</sup> Century,
  - War of the Spanish Succession
  - War of the Austrian Succession
  - And The Seven Year War
    - particularly costly to France; at its end France lost all its North American Territories- *On the Plain of Abraham*
    - (*Quebec City- Wolfe defeated Montcalm*)
- American Revolution- France sided with the colonists- France's support for the revolutionaries was primarily naval and financial.
  - Victory -> French spirits to soar- both because they defeated their common enemy the British, but also
  - because...LAFAYETTE- COMMITTEE OF 30
    - American Revolution embodied ->ideas of the Enlightenment



# Causes of the Revolution

## ■ Ancien Regime

### – 3 Estates

- 1<sup>st</sup> Estate: the Clergy

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Estate: the Nobles

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate: everyone else...bourgeoisie, sans culottes, peasants

## ■ France was bankrupt:

- 7 Years War and American Revolution

## ■ Tax structure: only the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate paid

## ■ Poor harvests in 1788: bread prices skyrocketed



1770: Rene Maupeou- abolishes parlement tries to increase taxes,  
parlement restored by Louis XIV

1781: Jacques Necker –first term a mixed bag- things aren't so bad but  
the rich are leeching off the State

1786: Charles Alexandre de Calonne ousted after trying to tax the nobles  
based on land holding

1787: Assembly of Notables objects to taxes; wants greater say.; wants  
Estates General to meet

Etienne Charles Lomenie de Brienne... Things are really  
bad...proposes a land tax

Provincial parlements demand more rights

1788: Necker returns

1789: French Estates General reconvenes...1<sup>st</sup> time since ?

# HOW BAD WAS THE PROBLEM?

- Expenses > Revenue by at least 20%
- Expenditures
  - 50%- interest on pre-existing debt!!! (in comparison, the service on the US Debt- which totals over \$14 TRILLION!!!, is approx. 12% of Govt. expenses)
  - 25% War, Navy and Diplomacy
  - 19% Other Govt. administrative expenses
  - 6% Versailles



# A perfect storm

- War debt
- Bad Harvest and a lousy winter
  - Rising Bread prices
    - Demands by urban poor-Bread riots! Common in the 18C
      - Bread constituted ? % of income? % of foodstuff?
    - A few peasants made money off the increased price but most didn't have enough land to take advantage of the price of grain.
- Enlightenment ideals- Rousseau? Smith? Montequieu?
- A spoiled Aristocracy?-
  - often barred from trades or professions- relied almost exclusively on income from their estates- expenses were also rising!- late 18C expenses forced them to try to revive obsolete old rights
- An enlightened Aristocracy?





# Louis XVI

Reign 1774-1792

Weak and indecisive King

Supported Colonists in American Revolution

Spent \$\$ lavishly

France owed huge debts---Louis had to figure a way out of the debt, he wanted to tax the nobles----they had money and weren't already severely taxed...but that didn't work- Nobles demanded a meeting of the *Estates General*

*The last Estates General meeting was \_\_\_\_\_?*

*King then was ?....so Cardinal ? Acted as Regent*



# Marie Antoinette



- King indecisive
  - Hated to disappoint anyone
- Queen was a Habsburg
  - Automatically hated by the French
  - Overwhelmed by the demands and etiquette of Versailles
- Both Marie and Louis were poorly prepared to deal with the crisis
- Devoted couple and good parents







# Estates General



- 1<sup>st</sup> Estate- Clergy...Church “nobles” Cardinals
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Estate- Nobles...Counts and Dukes
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate- Everyone Else
  - Bourgeoisie
  - Peasants
  - Serfs
  - Sans-culotte (urban poor...)
- Voting Procedures- Each Estate got one Vote-
  - Nobles and Church “nobles” typically allied with one another to outvote the third estate





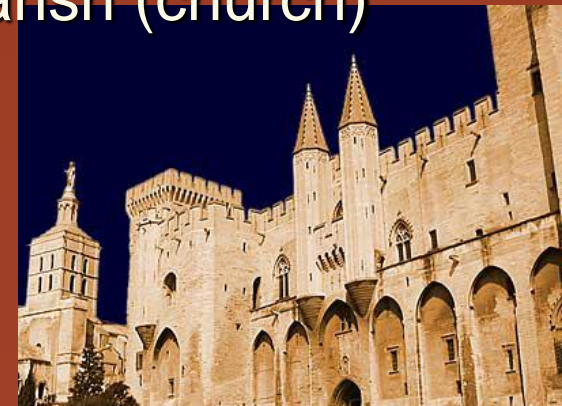
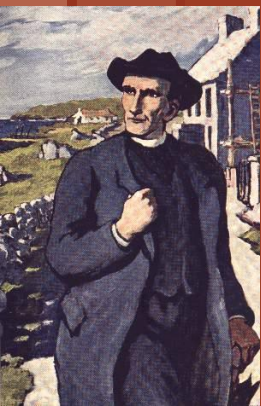
# Roman Catholic Church

Powerful in France

98%+ France was Catholic

(remember Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes W/EDICT OF ?)

- Cardinals, Bishops were treated as Nobility, well-educated
- Church not taxed- Huge tracts of Land owned -Some lands even had serfs
- Local Priests were not treated as well, often poor, not well-educated but well liked by their parish (church)





# NOBLES



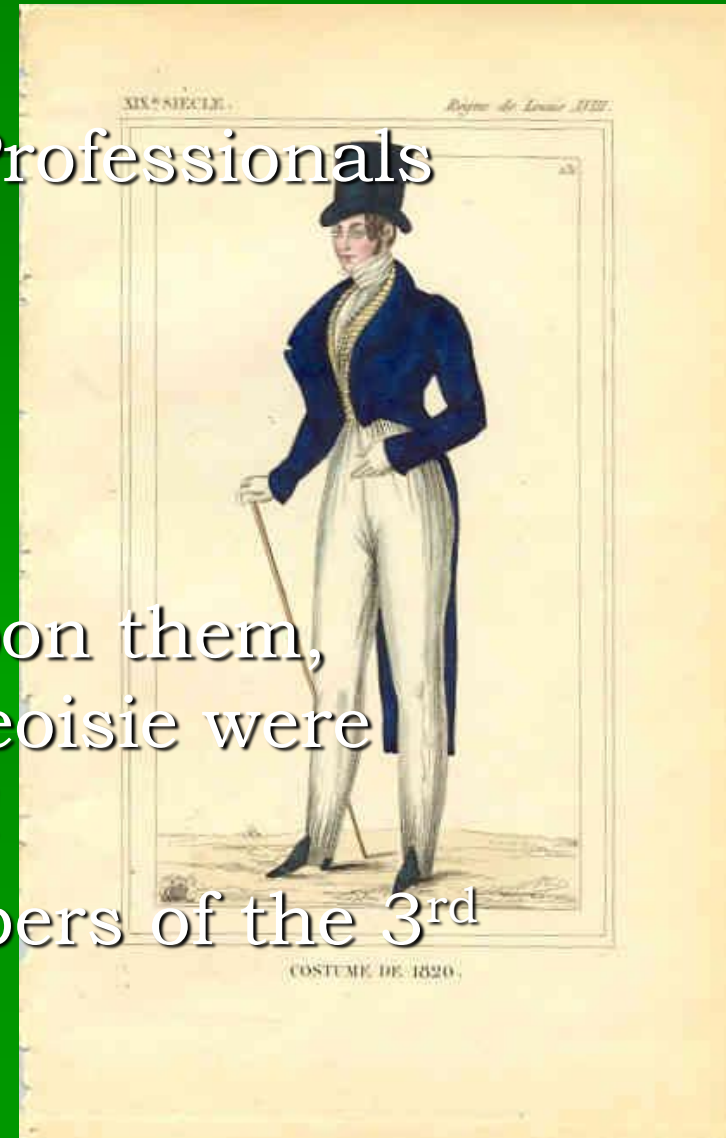
- One is born into nobility..maybe
- Nobles ->special prestige in France
- King reluctant to tax the Nobles-  
tried & failed
- Serfdom ->virtually free labor
- Owned approximately 20% of the  
land -2% of the population
- Many well-educated and shared  
enlightenment ideals



# BOURGEOISIE



- New Class of Upper Class Professionals
  - Bankers
  - Doctors
  - Lawyers
  - Owners of Companies
- The Nobles looked down upon them, however some of the bourgeoisie were wealthier than the Nobles!!!
- Little Political Power- Members of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate
- Some became Nobles?



# Sans Culottes and Peasants



- Sans Culottes ->urban poor, city-dwellers, craftsmen
- Peasants- most populous group, were generally poor and subsistence farmers (just enough food for them to eat) (w/serfs 80% of the Population)
  - Corvee- applied to both groups (work as tax)
  - Gabelle- salt tax
  - Taille-



# Serfdom



# June 20, 1789



## ■ Tennis Court Oath

- Upset with their poor treatment in the Estates General the 3rd Estate led by Abbé Siéyès created a new government- the National Assembly-



*“What is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Estate?  
Everything. What has it  
been in the political order  
up to the present?  
Nothing. What does it  
ask To become  
something.” Siéyès*

# THE BASTILLE

- Symbol of royal oppression
- Attack was the first violent act of revolution





# Storming of the Bastille

- 14 JULY 1789
- French Independence Day
- Bastille- Prison
- Parisians storm, King armory?



FrenchRev\_3.jpg: *The French Revolution*. The taking of the Bastille, July 14, 1789.

Credit: Erich Lessing/ Art Recource, NY.





# THE GREAT FEAR...

summer 1789

- Chateaux burned...records destroyed
- Intensification of peasant disturbances...
- Swept the French countryside



# What does the Unicorn Tapestry below have to do with the GREAT FEAR??



- The Great Fear- Peasants nervous about that the King and Nobles were massing troops, ransacked nobles' homes
- Rampant inflation, peasants demanded that Louis XVI and his wife, Marie Antoinette vacate Versailles

Unicorn Tapestries -> the Cloisters originally owned by a Noble French family, later stolen (during the great fear by peasants who used them for potato sacks!!!!)



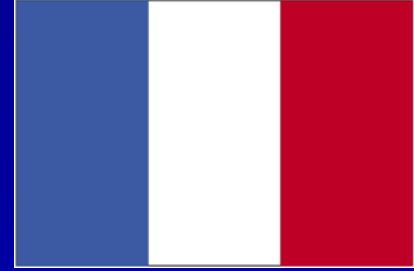


# DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND THE CITIZEN





# AUGUST 1789



*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*

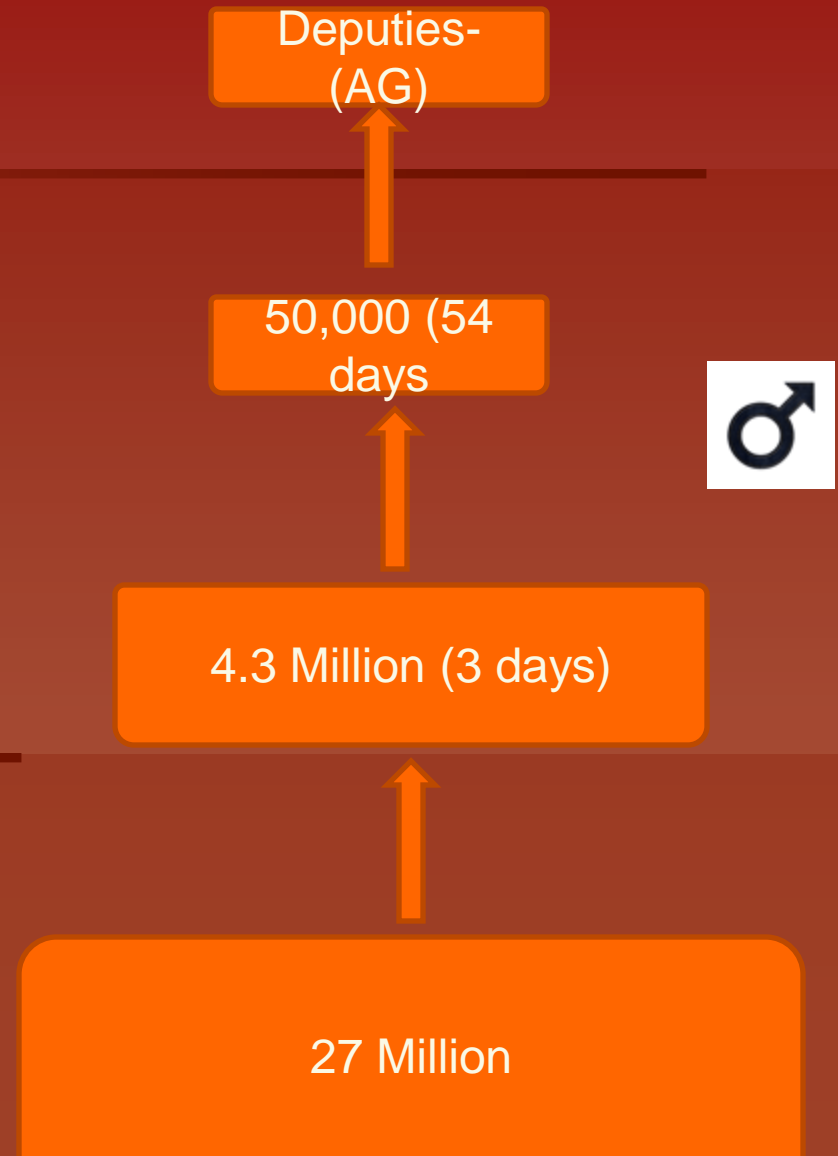
- Assembly passes A FRENCH BILL OF RIGHTS
- Right to
  - EQUAL JUSTICE
  - FREEDOM OF SPEECH
  - FREEDOM OF RELIGION
- TODAY THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS TRACES ITS EXISTENCE TO THE FRENCH REVOLUTION



=? \$?



# Rules



# The October Days



# MODERATE STAGE OF REVOLUTION 1789-1792

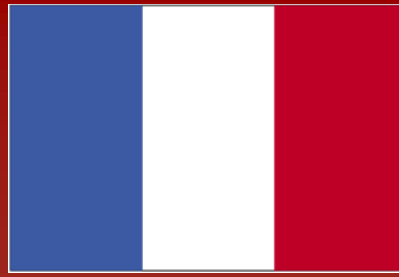
- Fall of the Bastille: July 14, 1789
- Great Fear...summer 1789
- Night of August 4: *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen*
- Departments
- State controlled church
- Constitution of 1791



# On the other hand...

- Was this a bourgeois revolution???-  
Constituent Assembly between 1789-1791...
  - Favored enclosure system for agriculture
  - Banned trade unions
  - Abolished guilds

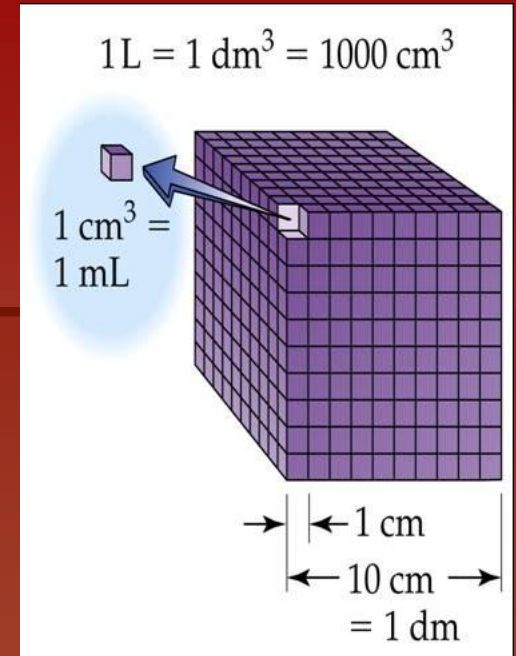
# A new France



COUNTRY IS DIVIDED  
INTO DISTRICTS-



METRIC  
SYSTEM



CATHOLIC CHURCH IS UNDER  
STATE CONTROL

CHURCH LOSES ITS  
LAND

CHURCH OFFICIALS  
ELECTED AND PAID BY THE  
GOVERNMENT

# Civil Constitution of the Clergy

- Catholic Church lost lands and independence
- Clergy to be elected and paid
- Clergy who agreed: *non-refractory or juring*
- Those who disagreed: *refractory or non-juring*



# DEPARTMENTS

- France divided into 83 administrative districts





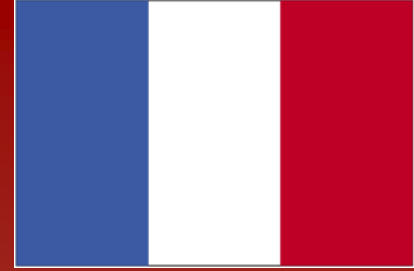
# Secularization of the State and the Beginning of an “anti-modernity” Church?

- 1790- Civil Constitution of the Clergy
  - Diocese now borders of a “department”
  - Church officials elected and paid by the State
  - Reduced # of bishops from 135 to 83
- Pope condemns -> Civil Constitution and the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen

# CONFISCATION OF CHURCH LANDS

- Assembly -> finance the debt confiscating & selling land and property of the Catholic church
- **Results:** inflation, religious schism, civil war
- **Assignats:** government bonds based on the revenue from the sale of church property

*Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite*



# **NATIONAL ASSEMBLY** (later the “Legislative Assembly”)

- 4 August 1789- National Assembly established
- Assembly wipes out the old days, forms the new official government of France
  - Limited Monarchy- King with limited rights
  - Protections to the Citizens
  - New limits to the Catholic church
  - Divide the country into departments rather than provinces





# THE FLIGHT TO VARENNES

## JUNE 20-22, 1791

- Earned the distrust of French citizens
- Planned to raise an army and crush the revolution
- Recognized and escorted back to Paris



# CONSTITUTION OF 1791

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Limited monarchy

Full equality under the law

National Assembly stepped down

Legislative Assembly took over  
spilt into 3 groups

**Right:** Conservatives

**Left:** Radicals

**Center:** Moderates

# LEFT V. RIGHT



- Members of the Legislative Assembly had different views
  - Radicals- Complete change- out with the old in with the new
  - Moderate- Some changes- but don't change everything
- In the Legislative Assembly
  - Radicals <-
  - Moderates sat to the Right->
- **Today- Radicals -<Leftists and Conservatives are known ->Right**



# Ring out the old Ring in the New

- Self-Denying Ordinance—all the members of the New National Assembly had to be new? Good Idea or Bad?

# Pillnitz

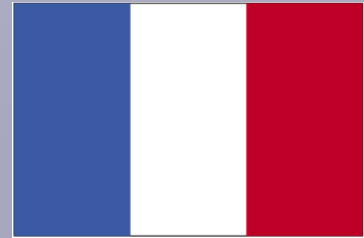


**READ ALL ABOUT - LATEST NEWS - 20 April  
1792**

# **PRUSSIA AND AUSTRIA AT WAR WITH FRANCE!!!**

- Marie Antoinette's brother, Leopold II of Austria threatens War with France (Declaration of Pillnitz)
- French Leftists see War as an opportunity to unite the country and spread the REVOLUTION
- France declares War on Austria,
- Prussia thereafter allies with Austria
- French Conscription (the draft) begins- France will amass an Army of 800,000

*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*









# 1792

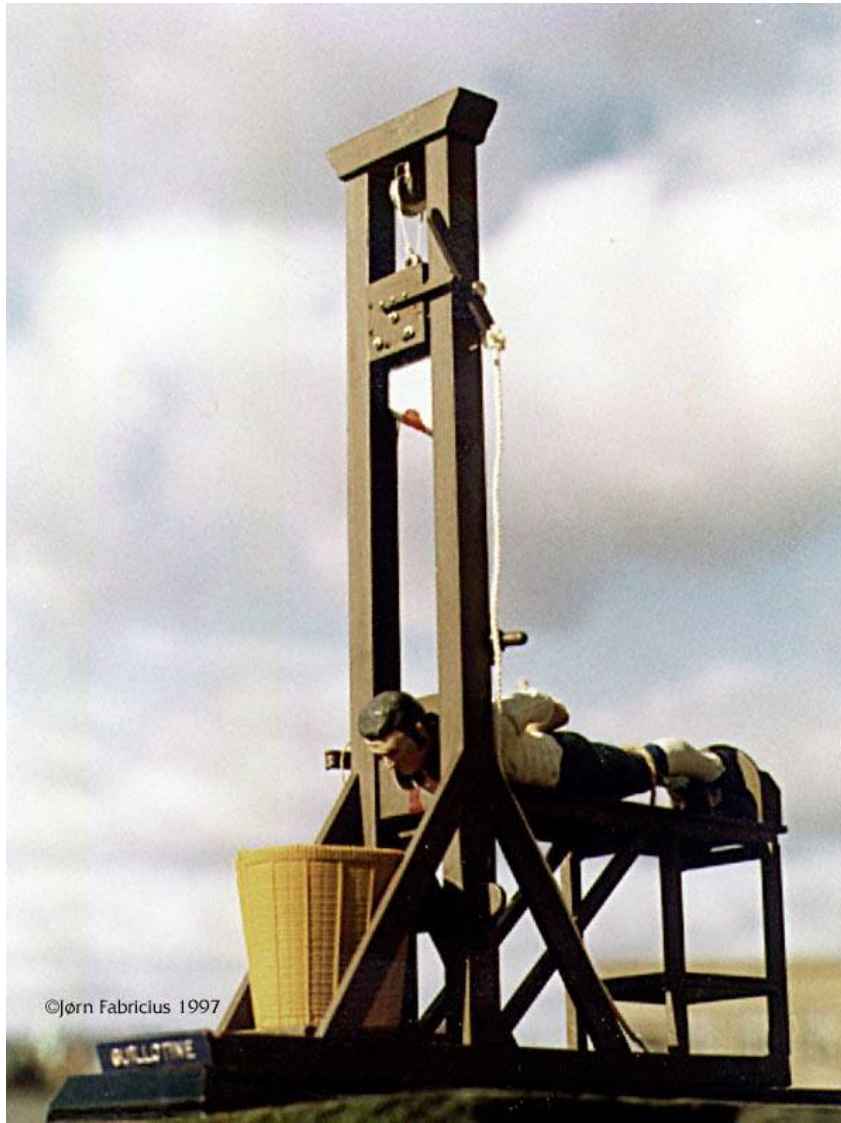
- The Paris Commune
  - new city government...radical
- War with Austria and Prussia
  - July 25...Prussian commander threatened Paris
- August 10: mob stormed the Tuilleries
  - Swiss Guard massacred...Louis and Marie imprisoned
- Legislative Assembly – National Convention
  - King and 1791 constitution deposed
- Girondin v. Jacobins

# THE PARIS COMMUNE

- New city government
- Radical- Mountain=Jacobins
- Dominant force in the Revolution
- Led by the sans-culottes
- Forced the Legislative Assembly to give up on a limited monarchy
  - set aside the constitution of 1791
  - deposed the king



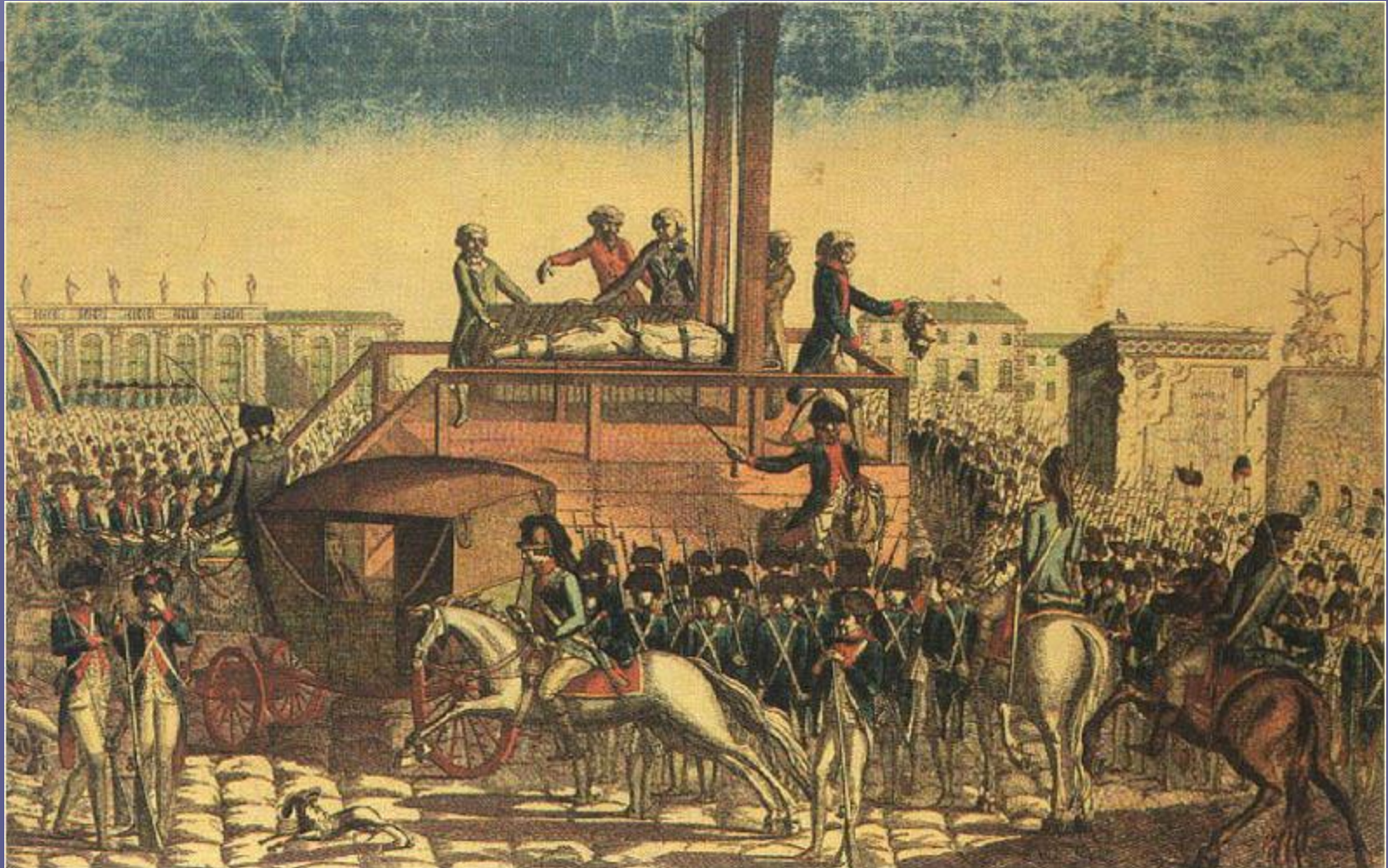
# LOUIS AND MARIE MEET THEIR DEMISE



- Prussia and Austria war with France, mob attack Kings' Paris Palace
- Legislative Assembly (Government) declares
- REPUBLIC
- Finally, Louis and Marie had a date with the "national razor".
- ? COMPARABLE W/CHARLES II?



# JANUARY 21, 1793...CITIZEN CAPET



# MARIE ANTOINETTE

## October 1793





# RADICAL STAGE 1792-1794

- Jacobins control v.
- Protests- Vendee and elsewhere



**Vendee Revolt**  
The siege of Granville, 1793



How should governments deal  
w/violent protest in the face of a  
crisis?

Not w/us yer ag'in us?

# THE JACOBINS

- Georges Danton



- Jean Paul Marat



- Camille Desmoulins



- Maximilian Robespierre







# Committee of Public Safety-

## Robespierre, Marat and Danton

### Committee of Public Safety

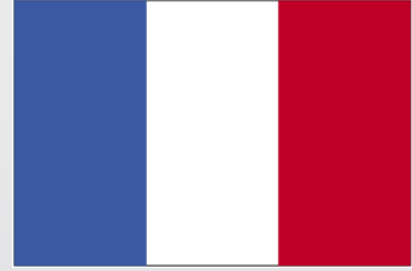
-Created to watch over (spy) on people to MAKE SURE EVERYONE IS ACTING "PROPERLY"

### 1000s are killed-

-MANY OF THOSE KILLED PREVIOUSLY SUPPORTED THE REVOLUTION

MONARCHS, NOBLES, CHURCH GOERS AND EVEN THE BOURGEOISIE ARE APPALLED AT THE REIGN OF TERROR  
*MARAT STABBED TO DEATH, DANTON ACCUSED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC SAFETY IS EXECUTED...*

Cooler heads eventually prevail, as ROBESPIERRE's head is cut off by the Guillotine

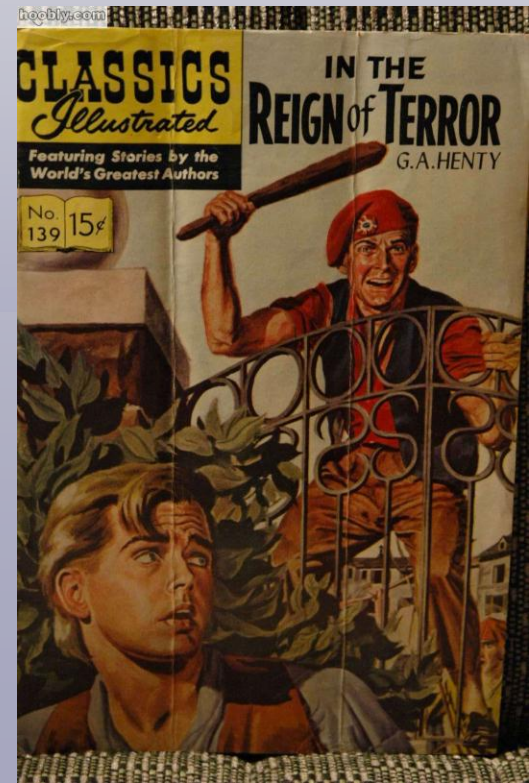


# Reign of Terror

A REPUBLIC OF VIRTUE

RADICALS DEMAND COMPLETE CHANGE-

- NOBLES FRIGHTENED FOR THEIR LIVES ESCAPE FRANCE
- PRIESTS AND CLERGY ARE KILLED-
- CHURCHES CHANGED TO MUSEUMS
- PLAYING CARDS WITH NO ROYALTY?
- A NEW CALENDAR!!!



# Poor Marat



“You’ll be next, Robespierre...”





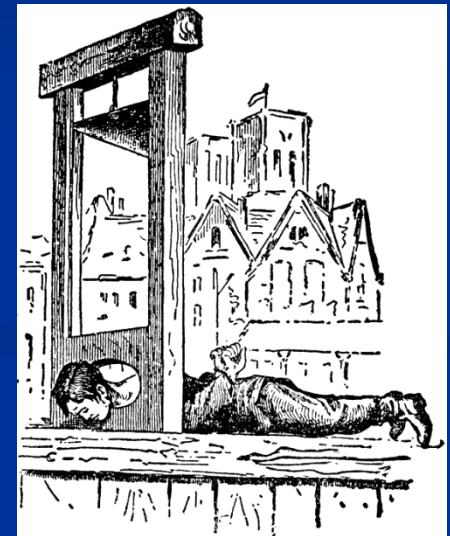


# THE TERROR

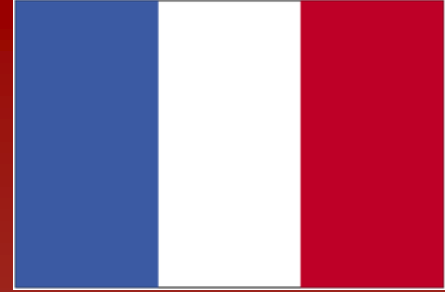
## 1793-1794



- The Republic of Virtue
- Committee of Public Safety
- New calendar
- Execution of Marie Antoinette
- Danton...April 1794
- 40,000 executed
- July 28, 1794...Robespierre was the final victim



# French Revolution Calendar



A year - 365 or 366 days, - 12 months of 30 days each, followed by 5 or 6 additional days.  
The months were:

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Vendémiaire-<br>(Windy) | 7. Germinal             |
| 2. Brumaire                | 8. Floréal              |
| 3. Frimaire                | 9. Prairial<br>(spring) |
| 4. Nivôse (autumn)         | 10. Messidor            |
| 5. Pluviôse (Rainy)        | 11. Thermidor<br>(hot)  |
| 6. Ventôse (winter)        | 12. Fructidor           |

Month - three *décades* of 10 days, of which the final day was a day of rest.  
de-Christianized the calendar, unpopular because now there were 9 work days between each day of rest,  
The ten days were called,:  
Primidi (1<sup>st</sup>), Duodi(2<sup>nd</sup>), Tridi(3<sup>rd</sup>), Quartidi(4<sup>th</sup>), Quintidi(5<sup>th</sup>), Sextidi, Septidi (7<sup>th</sup>), Octidi (8<sup>th</sup>), Nonidi (9<sup>th</sup>), Decadi(10<sup>th</sup>).

Year started on autumnal equinox (around 22 September),  
**-Years are counted since the establishment of the first French Republic** on 22 September 1792. That day became 1 Vendémiaire of the year 1 of the Republic.

**HOW DOES THE CALENDAR REFLECT THE REVOLUTION AND THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT?**





# A State Religion???



The Temple of Reason



# WORSHIP OF THE SUPREME BEING



VUE DE LA MONTAGNE ELEVÉE AU CHAMP DE LA RÉUNION.

*pour la fête qui y a été célébrée en l'honneur de l'Être Suprême le 20 Primal de l'an 7 de la République Française.*

# FINALLY THE TERROR ENDS...



- Robespierre is executed-
  - No More Committee of Public Safety
- ANOTHER CONSTITUTION IS WRITTEN
  - THE REIGN OF TERROR ENDS
  - Committee is set up to rule
    - Called The DIRECTORY (1795) is established
    - MODERATES RULE THE GOVERNMENT
    - A BRIEF PERIOD OF CALM PREVAILS---UNTIL
  - NAPOLEON is about to Rise- THE NEXT CHAPTER OF THE STORY

# Execution of Robespierre

## July 1794



# THERMIDORIAN REACTION





# *ENOUGH IS ENOUGH ALREADY!!*

- Widespread feeling that the revolution had become too radical
- Bourgeoisie replaced the sans-culottes
- Girondists returned
- Amnesty for political prisoners
- Paris Commune outlawed
- Jacobin Club closed
- “White Terror”...terrorists executed w/o due process
- Revival of Catholic worship
- Reestablishment of separate spheres for men and women

# THE DIRECTORY

## 1795-1799

- Constitution of the Year III
- Council of Elders-\$\$
- Council of 500-\$\$\$
- 5 directors-\$\$\$\$\$
- A political system based civic equality and social status based on ownership of property
- Secular idea of nationhood
- Largest new propertied class...the peasants

# QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- What made the Committee of Public Safety so radical and inflexible?
- Could Louis XVI have avoided his fate and remained as King of France?
- Should the nobles have just agreed to pay the Tax? Was that w/in the realm of their mindset?

# More questions to ponder

Unlike the American Revolution, the French Revolution is often considered a “People’s Revolution” in what ways do you think the ideals (motto) of the French Revolution still exist today?

Could the Revolution have tried to enlist the Church?

What’s your advice for modern day countries undergoing a major crisis?

What can Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Russia and even Greece learn?



